

PERSONNEL POLICY
Fauquier County, Virginia

Policy Title:
Benefit and Discount Program
Administration

Section No:
45

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11/1/94

~~Policy 45—Benefits and Discount Program Administration~~

~~I. PURPOSE~~

~~The Fauquier County Government offers its employees a variety of benefit and discount plans designed to meet individual needs. These plans are made available through a variety of sources. The Department of Personnel Services will be the office of record and will administer the benefits program. This policy sets forth the standards and guidelines used in administering the benefit programs. This policy is intended to be a summary of benefits only. For complete details regarding exclusions and limitations, please refer to the individual plan booklets, the Fauquier County Personnel Policies or contact the Department of Personnel Services.~~

~~II. SCOPE~~

~~All full-time permanent and part-time permanent employees of the Fauquier County Government are eligible for these services.~~

~~III. ENROLLMENT~~

- ~~A. New Employees are given an opportunity to enroll in the County's benefit programs for which they are eligible at the time of their employment orientation.~~
- ~~B. All eligible employees are given several options during the calendar year to enroll, cancel their enrollment, or make changes in their benefit programs.~~

~~IV. PROGRAM AREAS~~

~~Under IRS Code Section 125, the County provides payroll deduction for employees who voluntarily elect to participate in the Cafeteria or Flexible Benefits Plan. A Cafeteria or Flexible Benefits Plan is a benefit plan which allows each employee to choose from a menu of qualified benefits with the cost of selected benefit(s) paid on a pre-tax basis. Premiums an employee pays for individual and/or family medical coverage, child or dependent care, and supplemental insurance (e.g., cancer, disability, hospital indemnity, accident, certain life insurance policies, etc.) can be paid with pre-tax salary dollars through payroll deduction. Employees are eligible for this benefit(s) as of their date of hire. The plan year is an established 12 month period and no changes can be made during a plan year unless there has been a change in the employee's family status (e.g., marriage, divorce, death, birth, adoption, and termination of employment). Upon termination, it is the responsibility of the~~

~~employee to notify the appropriate insurance company. Please contact the Department of Personnel Services for complete details.~~

~~A. Health Insurancee~~

~~Full-time, permanent employees are eligible to enroll in group health insurance coverage. The County pays the subscriber only portion of this insurance coverage. The remainder of the premium (e.g., minor, spouse or family) is deducted from the employee's paycheck.~~

~~Part-time, permanent employees, for their first year of employment, and who work a regular schedule of at least 19 hours per week, pay the full premium amount. After the first year of employment, the employee pays a pro-rated amount based on the number of hours worked per week.~~

~~For dates of hire the 1st through the 10th of a month, employees are eligible for coverage the first day of the following month. (Example: employee begins on August 10, coverage becomes effective September 1.) For dates of hire the 11th through the 31st of a month, employees are eligible for coverage the first day of the second month following their start date. (Example: employee begins August 20, coverage becomes effective October 1.)~~

~~Upon termination, the employee may continue coverage under the COBRA law, or may enroll in an individual program. When an employee retires, the employee and eligible family members will be covered until the last day of the month in which the retirement occurs unless continuous coverage is elected. The employee has 60 days from the date coverage ends or the date the Group Administrator notifies the employee of their COBRA rights (whichever is later) to decide if they want to continue coverage. Continuing coverage under COBRA ends on the last day of the month in which the employee becomes entitled to Medicare benefits; the employee enrolls in another group health care plan unless that program has a pre-existing condition limitation; the employee fails to pay the monthly premium; the County no longer offers group coverage; or the employee reaches the end of the period of eligibility for continuing group coverage.~~

~~Under Section 15.1-7.3 of the Code of Virginia, County employees who retire with 15 years of service or more, can participate in the County's health care plan until the retiree reaches the age of 65 in accordance with subsequent provisions of this policy. At that time, he/she would be eligible for, and limited to, Medicare "carve-out" coverage. Blue Cross/Blue Shield requires that employees purchase Medicare Part "B" to be eligible for this carve-out coverage.~~

~~County employees who retired prior to January 1, 1995, with 10 years of service or more and did not elect health care coverage at the time of retirement will be given a one-time option to re-enroll in the County's health care plan.~~

~~County employees who retire after January 1, 1995, with 10 years of service or more will be given a one time option to participate in the County's health care plan. Each year following January 1, 1995, years of service requirements will increase for retirees, capping to a minimum of 15 years of service by January 1, 2000.~~

~~Effective January 1, 2000, retirees over age 65, must meet a minimum combination of age and years of service totaling 80 years creating "rules of 80". For this purpose, "rules of 80" would require a 65 year old individual to have had 15 years of Virginia Retirement System (VRS) service; a 68 year old individual would have had 12 years of VRS service.~~

~~VRS service accrued while in the employ of Fauquier County Schools, Town of Remington and Town of Warrenton will be included for the purpose of determining eligibility so long as the individual retires from the County. The election to continue on the County's health care plan will be a one time option only, at the time the employee retires and must be exercised within 60 days from the date of retirement.~~

~~Upon proper notification of an employee's intent to retire from the County, the Department of Personnel Services will provide applicable information and enrollment forms and will process the forms appropriately.~~

~~Continuing coverage under the County's health care plan will end if the retiree fails to pay the required monthly premium in the allotted time; written notification is received from the retiree that the coverage is no longer desired; the retiree becomes deceased; or, the County no longer offers group coverage. Retirees and dependents whose coverage terminates for whatever reason are not eligible to re-enroll in the County's health care plan.~~

~~Retirees are responsible for the full cost of coverage selected for themselves and dependents. The retiree is responsible for sending proper payments one month prior to the starting date (ex: payment for June 1 is due May 1). If payment is not received within thirty (30) days of the payment due date the retiree will be terminated from the coverage with no further notice. Retiree's are responsible for keeping the Department of Personnel Services informed of any changes in address or any other data that may effect their coverage.~~

~~Changes in coverage may be made at any time. Effective dates would be determined on the date changes are made. Retirees are eligible for Medicare benefits the first of the month in which they turn 65 years of age.~~

~~Retirees who are eligible to continue medical coverage after retirement and had purchased group medical coverage for dependent(s) prior to retirement, may include those dependents for coverage at their own expense until such time as one of the following events takes place: divorce or legal separation of the retiree and spouse (without court settlement requiring coverage); the dependent ceases to be~~

~~a "dependent child" under the provision of the plan; employee ceases to pay; or the County no longer offers group coverage. The retiree or dependent has the responsibility to inform the Department of Personnel Services of these changes.~~

~~B. Supplemental Insurance~~

~~The County provides payroll deduction for employees who voluntarily elect to participate in a supplemental cancer policy or a supplemental life and accident insurance policy. This type of supplemental insurance is offered to all permanent employees on a semiannual basis through private insurance companies. Employees are eligible for this benefit as of their date of hire. Upon termination, it is the responsibility of the employee to notify the appropriate insurance company and to either continue payment or cancel the policy.~~

~~C. Life Insurance, Accidental Death and Dismemberment Insurance~~

~~Full-time permanent employees are eligible for this County paid benefit provided by the Virginia Retirement System. Coverage is two times the salary for natural death. The accidental death benefit is an additional two times the salary. For loss of one limb, or sight of one, payment equals the annual salary. For loss of two or more limbs, and/or eye sight, payment equals two times the salary. Employees are eligible for this benefit as of their date of hire.~~

~~Upon termination, group life insurance will cease unless the employee converts to an individual policy at non group rates. The employee may do this by simply filing with the Virginia Retirement System.~~

~~Upon retirement, life insurance will continue at no cost to the employee. The amount of life insurance coverage will begin to reduce after retirement. The amount of the reduction is 2% each month until the coverage reaches 25% of the original value.~~

~~D. Retirement~~

~~Full-time permanent employees are eligible for this County paid benefit. The Virginia Retirement System (VRS) provides its members with benefits at retirement or upon disability or death. Employees become vested when they accumulate five or more years of credited service. Vested members are eligible to receive retirement benefit from VRS as early as age 55; however, members will receive a reduced benefit if they have fewer than 30 years of service.~~

~~Through VRS, law enforcement officers are covered under the Virginia State Law Enforcement Officers System (LEOS), and are eligible to retire with reduced benefits at age 50 with 25 years of service.~~

~~Each year VRS provides members with a personalized statement indicating the amount of service credit, total contributions plus interest, information about life insurance, and projected retirement and social security benefits. Employees are eligible for all VRS retirement benefits as of their date of hire.~~

~~Upon termination of employment, vested members have the option of taking a refund or leaving the money in the system. The employee is eligible for a refund of contributions plus interest if the employee is leaving a covered position and will not enter another position for at least 30 days. (A covered position is a position covered by VRS.) If the employee has at least 5 years of service and does not request a refund, the employee will retain service credit and membership in the system and will be entitled to an annuity upon attaining age 55.~~

~~E. Deferred Compensation~~

~~This benefit is provided through the International City Management Association (ICMA) Retirement Corporation. Employees are eligible to participate in this IRS approved method for deferring federal and state income taxes on savings until retirement. Participants have the opportunity to select and combine investments in order to carefully construct a supplemental retirement plan that most effectively protects and builds their retirement dollars.~~

~~F. Sick Leave Bank~~

~~Membership in the bank is voluntary and is open to all permanent employees. Enrollment is established by the donation of one day of sick leave from each member. Benefits begin on the 31st calendar day of approved disability. The benefit amount is 100% of gross weekly earning for a maximum of 60 working days within a 12 month period. Members utilizing sick leave days from the bank do not have to replace those days. Employees are eligible for this benefit as of their date of hire. (Please see Personnel Policy, Section #37, Sick Leave Bank Program.)~~

~~G. Employee Assistance Program~~

~~All Full time and part time permanent employees and their family members are eligible for this County paid program offered through the Fauquier Family Guidance Services in Warrenton. This program provides confidential and professional short term counseling for employees and their families on a wide range of personal problems, including alcoholism, drug abuse, emotional problems, marriage and family problems, and financial problems. Employees are eligible as of their date of hire.~~

~~H. Educational Assistance~~

~~Full time and in some cases, part time permanent employees, with prior written approval from their Department Head and the County Administrator, may take academic or vocational courses through an accredited and/or approved school or an institution and receive reimbursement of 50% of the allowable expenses. A grade of "C" or higher is required in order to be eligible for the reimbursement. Employees are eligible as of their date of hire. (Please see Personnel Policy, Section #16, Education and Training Assistance.)~~

~~I. Employee Credit Union~~

~~All County employees, and their family members are eligible to join the Vint Hill Farms Station Federal Credit Union. This benefit provides employees with a payroll deduction method for saving money. A Savings Bond Program is also available through the credit union. Employees are eligible for this benefit as of their date of hire.~~

~~Upon termination, it is the responsibility of the employee to notify the Credit Union of their intention to either make their own payments or to close the account.~~

~~J. Fitness Center Membership~~

~~Full time and part time permanent employees are eligible to receive a membership discount to Pike's Peak Fitness Center. The employee pays a \$100 non-refundable initiation fee directly to Pike's Peak, and through payroll deduction, the cost is then \$35 per month. Employees are eligible for this benefit as of their date of hire. Membership becomes effective the first day of the month following the payroll deduction. Upon termination, it is the responsibility of the employee to notify Pike's Peak Fitness Center of their intention to either continue payment on their own or to discontinue the membership.~~

~~V. DISCOUNT PROGRAMS~~

~~Many local vendors and merchants offer discount programs to County employees. The County does not endorse or recommend particular merchants or vendors, but makes available the names of vendors and merchants who offer discounts to County employees as a service to its employees.~~

~~Please contact the Department of Personnel Services for a list of the discount programs, or if you have any questions regarding a particular program.~~

~~VI. EXCEPTIONS~~

~~Employees on Leave Without Pay Status (LWOP)~~

~~A supervisory authority may grant a permanent employee leave without pay for a period not to exceed 90 calendar days. Requests in excess of 90 calendar days must be approved by the Board of Supervisors.~~

~~LWOP Not Exceeding 90 Calendar Days:~~

- ~~A. The employee will retain all employer paid benefits, except leave accrual. Leave does not accrue for any period unless the employee is compensated for at least one half of the working days in that pay period.~~
- ~~B. The employee must pay any health insurance premium that is normally deducted from their paycheck fifteen days prior to each payday. The employee is responsible for making payments to the individual companies for all other elected deductions, e.g., cancer insurance, accident insurance, credit union, and the fitness center.~~

~~LWOP Exceeding 90 Calendar Days:~~

- ~~A. The employee will lose service credit with the Virginia Retirement System.~~
- ~~B. Health insurance benefits paid by the employer will cease. The employee can elect to continue health insurance by paying 100% of the premium costs.~~